

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMCONSUL HAMILTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2526 PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

CONFIDENTIAL HAMILTON 403

E.O. 11652:
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BD, UK
SUBJECT: PREMIER ANNOUNCES NEW CABINET
REF: HAMILTON 398

1. AFTER FOUR DAYS OF TENSE NEGOTIATIONS WITH BOTH FACTIONS WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY, PREMIER DAVID GIBBONS HAS FORMED HIS NEW CABINET. REFORMISTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FOUR PORTFOLIOS (TOURISM, HEALTH, PLANNING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS) AND THE PROMISE OF A NEW POST TO BE CREATED WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS TO DEAL WITH CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (INDEPENDENCE). BALANCE OF PORTFOLIOS ARE RETAINED BY THE INCUMBENT CABINET MEMBERS FROM THE SHARPE GOVERNMENT.

2. UNDER NEW CAUCUS RULES PROMULGATED AUGUST 18, POST OF DEPUTY PREMIER IS TO BE SELECTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF HOUSE MEMBERS. IT IS CONCEDED THAT POST WILL GO TO REFORMIST C.V. WOOLRIDGE. DISCUSSIONS WITH LEADERS OF REFORMIST GROUP INDICATE THAT GIBBONS HAS PUT TOGETHER A WORKABLE COALITION AND THAT FACTIONALISM WITHIN THE PARTY WILL BE LAID TO REST.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PUTTING WOOLRIDGE IN AS NUMBER TWO MAN (AND HEIR APPARENT TO FUTURE POST OF PREMIER) WILL SOMEWHAT DISSIPATE GIBBONS' AND PARTY'S IMAGE AS WHITE, CONSERVATIVE, AND FRONT STREET CONTROLLED, IT IS CLEAR THAT UBP HAS UP-HILL BATTLE TO REGAIN CREDIBILITY

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WITH THE LARGE FLOATING MIDDLE CLASS BLACK VOTE. MEANWHILE OPPOSITION PEOPLES LABOR PARTY IS CAPITALIZING ON PAST FACTIONALISM WITHIN UBP AND CLAIMING THAT ELEVATION OF GIBBONS IS CLEAR CONCESSION THAT UBP IS PARTY OF THE WHITE, MONEYED INTERESTS IN THE COLONY. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT STRIFE WITHIN UBP DURING PAST YEAR HAS LOST THE PARTY CONSIDERABLE FACTION OF THE IMPORTANT FLOATING BLACK VOTE - TO THE EXTENT THAT SEVERAL UBP PARLIAMENTARIANS HAVE CONCEDED TO ME PRIVATE-

LY THAT THE PLP WOULD PROBABLY WIN IF A GENERAL ELECTION WERE HELD NOW. HOWEVER, WITH THE FACTIONALISM ALLEGEDLY BEHIND THEM, THERE NOW SEEMS TO BE AN INFUSION OF OPTIMISM THAT THE PARTY CAN REGAIN LOST GROUND AND RETAIN ITS MAJORITY IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION IN 1981.

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Message Attributes

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